

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE			Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188		
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1. REPORT DATE (DD-MM-YYYY) 20-05-2013		2. REPORT TYPE FINAL		3. DATES COVERED (From - To)	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE REBALANCING PACIFIC FLEET: OPERATIONALIZE U.S. THIRD FLEET AND MOVE IT INTO THE INDO-ASIA-PACIFIC REGION IN SUPPORT OF THE DEFENSE STRATEGIC GUIDANCE		5a. CONTRACT NUMBER			
		5b. GRANT NUMBER			
		5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER			
6. AUTHOR(S)  LCDR Kyle P. Riley, USN  Paper Advisor (if Any): N/A		5d. PROJECT NUMBER			
		5e. TASK NUMBER			
		5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER			
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)  Joint Military Operations Department Naval War College 686 Cushing Road Newport, RI 02841-1207		8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER			
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)		10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)			
		11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)			
12. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Distribution Statement A: Approved for public release; Distribution is unlimited. Reference: DOD Directive 5230.24					
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES A paper submitted to the Naval War College faculty in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Joint Military Operations Department. The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the NWC or the Department of the Navy.					
14. ABSTRACT Rebalancing Pacific Fleet: Operationalize U.S. Third Fleet and move it into the Indo-Asia-Pacific in support of the Defense Strategic Guidance (DSG).  As a Pacific power the United States has made a strategic commitment to rebalance to this vital region. Analysis of strategic, service, and combatant commander guidance compared against U.S. Pacific Fleet (PACFLT) and its numbered fleets mission statements highlights a disparity between U.S. Third Fleet (C3F) "the training fleet" and U.S. Seventh Fleet (C7F) "the operational fleet". This paper explains how this disparity must be rebalanced in order to accomplish and best support the DSG national objectives. This paper recommends PACFLT operationalize C3F and move it move forward into the Indo-Asia-Pacific region. Having two operational commanders forward will create focused maritime theaters in East Asia (C7F) and South Asia-Oceania (C3F). This improves PACFLT's command and control mechanisms, reduces the tyranny of distance associated with this vast region, and enhances regional engagement. Additionally, this move would create standardization for the Navy by placing Commander, U.S. Fleet Forces in charge of all manning, training, and equipment issues for the service. This paper acknowledges the complexities of moving a headquarters, selecting a location, and creating new geographic seams but presents an implementation plan and notional timeline to mitigate these concerns. The recommendations made throughout this paper, specifically the decisions to operationalize C3F, the Pacific Fleet Balancing Commission, and the move forward are sensible and should be adopted.					
15. SUBJECT TERMS Defense Strategic Guidance, U.S. Pacific Command, U.S. Pacific Fleet, U.S. Third Fleet, U.S. Seventh Fleet, Asia-Pacific, Rebalance, U.S. Fleet Forces Command, Training					
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF: UNCLASSIFIED			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT	18. NUMBER OF PAGES	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON Chairman, JMO Dept
a. REPORT UNCLASSIFIED	b. ABSTRACT UNCLASSIFIED	c. THIS PAGE UNCLASSIFIED		33	19b. TELEPHONE NUMBER (include area code) 401-841-3556

**REBALANCING PACIFIC FLEET: OPERATIONALIZE U.S. THIRD FLEET AND  
MOVE IT INTO THE INDO-ASIA-PACIFIC IN SUPPORT OF  
THE DEFENSE STRATEGIC GUIDANCE**



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A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Joint Military Operations.

The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_  
20 May 2013

**NAVAL WAR COLLEGE  
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Cover Page Photo: PEARL HARBOR (July 2, 2012) Adm. Cecil Haney, commander of U.S. Pacific Fleet, accompanied by senior officers of nations participating in exercise Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC), addresses the media during a press conference announcing the start of RIMPAC. (Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force photo by PO1 Takahiro Ito) From U.S. Pacific Fleet Public Affairs.

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## **Paper Abstract**

*Rebalancing Pacific Fleet: Operationalize U.S. Third Fleet and move it into the Indo-Asia-Pacific in support of the Defense Strategic Guidance (DSG).*

As a Pacific power the United States has made a strategic commitment to rebalance to this vital region. Analysis of strategic, service, and combatant commander guidance compared against U.S. Pacific Fleet (PACFLT) and its numbered fleets mission statements highlights a disparity between U.S. Third Fleet (C3F) “the training fleet” and U.S. Seventh Fleet (C7F) “the operational fleet”. This paper explains how this disparity must be rebalanced in order to accomplish and best support the DSG national objectives. This paper recommends PACFLT operationalize C3F and move it move forward into the Indo-Asia-Pacific region. Having two operational commanders forward will create focused maritime theaters in East Asia (C7F) and South Asia-Oceania (C3F). This improves PACFLT's command and control mechanisms, reduces the tyranny of distance associated with this vast region, and enhances regional engagement. Additionally, this move would create standardization for the Navy by placing Commander, U.S. Fleet Forces in charge of all manning, training, and equipment issues for the service. This paper acknowledges the complexities of moving a headquarters, selecting a location, and creating new geographic seams but presents an implementation plan and notional timeline to mitigate these concerns. The recommendations made throughout this paper, specifically the decisions to operationalize C3F, the *Pacific Fleet Balancing Commission*, and the move forward are sensible and should be adopted.

*“Asia will largely define whether the century ahead will be marked by conflict or cooperation, needless suffering or human progress.”*

*President Barack Obama  
November 2011*

### **Increased Commitment Requires the Reorganization of the Pacific Fleet**

For over a decade the United States military has been immersed in Central Command’s area of responsibility (AOR). As these operations wind down the military has been given new marching orders, reaffirming the importance of the Indo-Asia-Pacific. In the 2012 Defense Strategic Guidance (DSG), the President was very clear that in order to preserve America’s role as a global leader and meet the security challenges of the future, the United States will have to rebalance towards this region. The President’s objective is to “advance security, prosperity and human dignity across the Asia-Pacific.”<sup>1</sup> The principal military command charged with implementing this strategy is U.S. Pacific Command (PACOM). When examining the AOR (see Appendix A), two things stand out: the sheer size of the AOR and the predominant feature of the maritime landscape. Undoubtedly, U.S. Pacific Fleet (PACFLT) must serve as a critical enabler for this new strategy.

Command and control in this vast expanse is vital: “Since the age of fighting sail, command and control has been a central element of naval operations. Across the full range of operations from peace, to operations other than war, to war it is our means of influencing the actions of our forces and imposing our will on the enemy. Command and control enables the naval commander to understand the situation in his battlespace, select a course of action, issue intent and orders, monitor the execution of operations, and evaluate the results. It is the primary tool he uses to cope with the disorder and uncertainty of warfare. Without it, organized military operations are impossible.”<sup>2</sup> Currently, PACFLT operational commanders are not optimally

aligned to meet the challenges of command and control within their battlespace or to accomplish the objectives of the DSG. PACFLT should operationalize the current "training fleet", U.S. Third Fleet (C3F), and move it forward from San Diego into the Indo-Asia-Pacific. This will enable C3F to share the burden with the "operational fleet," U.S. Seventh Fleet (C7F) and accomplish the objectives established in the DSG.

### **U.S. Pacific Command's Strategy**

The DSG provides the President's strategic direction to the Department of Defense (DOD) specifically stating, "...while the U.S. military will continue to contribute to security globally, we will of necessity rebalance toward the Asia-Pacific region."<sup>3</sup> The guidance acknowledges fiscal constraints, but the direction is clear and places greater importance on the region. The Secretary of State recently characterized the goal of the United States in the region as, "Our Pacific Dream is to translate our strongest values into an unprecedented security, economic, and social cooperation."<sup>4</sup> This strategic rebalance transcends the DOD and will require a whole of government approach. However, in order to achieve the unprecedented "security, economic, and social cooperation" the DOD, specifically PACOM and subordinate commanders in conjunction with intra agency partners, will need to seek new and innovative ways to meet the direction laid out in the DSG.

Admiral Samuel J. Locklear, III published PACOM's Strategy that "defines United States Pacific Command's approach to the Asia-Pacific and reflects our contribution to U.S. efforts to rebalance to the region."<sup>5</sup> The guidance provides a "Strategic Approach" by which PACOM and subordinate commands will achieve national objectives and focuses on three key areas: relationships, presence, and communication. In each area, leaders are provided a clear and

concise framework to understand how PACOM's Strategy will be accomplished. For example under the section titled "Build Strong Relationships" the following means are provided: security cooperation, multilateral approaches, and senior level engagement, etc. "Assured Presence" highlights forward presence, new systems and operating concepts, and other mechanisms. Lastly, strategic communication is to convey U.S. intent and resolve in the region to multiple audiences.<sup>6</sup>

### **Implications for U.S. Pacific Fleet**

The PACOM AOR is dominated by its vast maritime landscape and presents a unique opportunity for the Navy component, PACFLT, headquartered like PACOM in Hawaii, to take the foremost role in implementing the PACOM strategy. Similar to PACOM, the PACFLT Commander has a mission and vision statement and guiding principles that are nested and support the overarching military and national strategy. Additionally, PACFLT highlights four priorities: 1. Warfighting Readiness; 2. Advance Regional Partnerships and Alliances; 3. Purposeful, Forward Presence; and 4. Value our people and their families.<sup>7</sup>

In order to accomplish its mission, PACFLT is organized with two operational commanders; C3F in San Diego and C7F embarked on USS BLUE RIDGE in Yokosuka, Japan, as well as numerous type and regional commanders. All commanders regardless of their function have the duty to ensure warfighting readiness and to take care of their people. But the operational commanders are resourced and positioned to have the greatest impact on priorities to advance regional partnerships and alliances and purposeful, forward presence, pending they are organized and employed properly. Consequently, PACFLT priorities (2 and 3) are most closely aligned



and will have the greatest impact on achieving the military objectives, and hence the national objectives, with the Indo-Asia-Pacific rebalance.

### **Unbalanced Division of Labor**

In order to propose a new theater wide Navy command structure it is useful to understand the geography, structure, mission statements, and division of labor between these two operational commanders in their current form. PACFLT divides 100 million square miles; more than half the earth's surface between C3F and C7F (see Appendix B). The geographic division occurs at the International Date Line. C3F AOR encompasses the Eastern Pacific, from the West Coast of North America towards the International Date Line. C7F AOR encompasses the Western Pacific and Indian Ocean from the International Date Line west towards the 68th meridian east, which runs down from the India-Pakistan border. Although the two numbered fleets AOR's are approximately equal in physical size (~50 million square miles each) they are not equal in terms of complexity or challenges.

### **U.S. Third Fleet, the Training Fleet**

Although PACFLT considers C3F an operational commander, it is not their operational mission that occupies the majority of C3F efforts. The first heading on their website is "U.S Third Fleet provides the realistic, relevant training necessary for an effective global Navy."<sup>8</sup> The second bullet addresses their operational role in the Eastern Pacific. This is not to diminish their operational role, it just clearly is not as important as their role in providing ready forces. In interviews the Commander, VADM Gerald R. Beaman, clearly articulates the importance of the training mission: "It's our job to train [Sailors and Marines] and make sure that they excel in effectiveness when they go forward, especially in a time of high global demand ... We train to a

full range of missions, from humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, to maritime security operations, to amphibious assault and disaggregated operations. Flexibility requires strength in all of those missions.”<sup>9</sup> In addition to their internal training mission, C3F leads the largest international maritime training exercise, Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) exercise every two years. This provides a remarkable opportunity for Pacific nations to work together in the maritime domain and advance interoperability and nurture relationships. The theme of RIMPAC 2012 was “Capable, Adaptive, Partners.”<sup>10</sup> During the most recent C3F change of command the following accomplishments were highlighted: “he [Vice Adm. Richard W. Hunt] directed the successful completion of many deployments, exercises and humanitarian missions; such as Operation Tomodachi [support to the Japanese earthquake recovery], RIMPAC 2010, Terminal Fury, and Talisman Saber.”<sup>11</sup> The last four on that list occurred forward, clearly highlighting the need for another maritime commander forward to balance operations and exercises.

C3F does retain an operational mission and maintains maritime security throughout their AOR. “We are involved with the North American Maritime Security Initiative [NAMSII], with Canada and Mexico, the United States Navy and the United States Coast Guard, to provide for the security and stability of the sea lanes approaching North America. We routinely conduct exercises with the Canadian navy, Mexican navy, and with our Coast Guard partners, to exercise procedures and processes in information sharing, [and] turnover of responsibilities.”<sup>12</sup> This mission which is clearly important would be further diminished if it becomes a homeland defense or defense support to civil authorities as C3F would serve as a force provider to U.S. Fleet Forces (FFC). FFC serves as the Joint Forces Maritime Component Commander North (JFMCC-N) to Commander, U.S. Northern Command (USNORTHCOM) and would “command and control subordinate forces during the planning and execution of joint missions.”<sup>13</sup>

## **U.S. Seventh Fleet, the Operational Fleet**

By contrast C7F is the operational commander doing the heavy lifting for PACFLT. The Seventh Fleet AOR encompasses all of the 36 nations [37 nations]<sup>14</sup> that comprise the Indo-Asia-Pacific region and contains more than 50% of the world's population.

This region is culturally, socially, economically, and geo-politically diverse. The nations of the Indo-Asia-Pacific include five of our nation's seven treaty allies, three of the largest economies in the world, and seven of the ten smallest; the most populous nations in the world, the largest democracy; the largest Muslim-majority nation; and the world's smallest republic... The Indian Ocean is surpassing the Atlantic and Pacific as the world's busiest and most strategically significant trade corridor... By any meaningful measure, the Indo-Asia-Pacific is also the world's most militarized region, with seven of the ten largest standing militaries, the world's largest and most sophisticated navies, and five of the world's declared nuclear armed nations. All these aspects, when you take them together, result in a unique strategic complexity... The Indo-Asia-Pacific has a myriad of security challenges, including rapidly growing military capabilities, nuclear developments, unresolved territorial and resource disputes, violent extremism, natural disasters, proliferation, illicit trafficking and more. This complex security environment continues to evolve with both positive and negative trends.<sup>15</sup>

The sheer scope of the challenges C7F is charged with overseeing, makes one question whether PACFLT's numbered fleets are optimally aligned. As noted by the military historian Milan Vego, "Sound command organization should allow the individual commander to continuously monitor the situation within his area of responsibility plus his area of interest."<sup>16</sup> The C7F AOR stretches eight time zones. It is not farfetched to imagine a time when the C7F is simultaneously engaged with multiple maritime challenges across the Western Pacific and Indian Ocean that stretches their capacity. This is not to say C7F cannot handle their assigned missions; this is suggesting there is a better way to ensure the commander can continuously monitor his AOR. Consider the following statement by the Commander, VADM Scott H. Swift, "Building, maintaining and extending a maritime partnership follows the same process as developing a friendship, it starts with spending time together and getting to know each other. You can't build

a meaningful relationship through emails, letters, or video teleconferences. We must sit together, we must meet face to face, we must have meaningful dialogues that challenge individual ideas.”<sup>17</sup> Looking at just senior level engagement is it truly feasible for C7F to effectively build meaningful relationships from an area as vast as the Indo-Asia-Pacific region? The tyranny of distance within its AOR makes it extremely difficult, if not impossible. For example the distance from Tokyo, Japan (closest airport to C7F) to Kochi, India, home of the Indian Southern Naval Command, is approximately 4,300 miles or 9 hours flying time. This challenge does not only apply to senior level engagement. The Commander also has to duplicate and deal with these complexities as they pertain to planning, preparing, directing, and controlling<sup>18</sup> his forces across this vast AOR.

### **PACFLT Rebalancing Efforts?**

When analyzing the Indo-Asia-Pacific rebalance the Navy could be characterized as heavy on the strategic messaging and so far light on actual details, save the arrival of one LCS to Singapore<sup>19</sup>. Admiral Cecil D. Haney recently stated, “As the commander of the United States Pacific Fleet, I focus on four priorities with regard to my decision making. I have been talking about two of them as I described the importance of our forward presence in the region and building and strengthening relationships with our allies and partners. But, these are underpinned by my two remaining priorities, which are sustaining credible combat capability...and supporting the Sailors and civilians who make up my Pacific Fleet. These priorities are in support of the United States strategy to rebalance to the Asia-Pacific.”<sup>20</sup> If “forward presence” and “building and strengthening relationships” are the commander’s priority than moving C3F forward will serve as a means to accomplish these objectives. Additionally he has stated, “I have two fleets, 3rd Fleet located here in San Diego...and the 7th Fleet located in Yokosuka, Japan. Together,

this team is responsible for executing the maritime strategy where we work to execute the full range of maritime operations. That includes humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, all the way through deterrence and power projection if deterrence fails. Our rebalancing efforts further enhance our abilities to carry out this strategy.”<sup>21</sup> Here again a lot of strategic messaging, but little on how PACFLT is actually rebalancing. Retaining an operational fleet in San Diego does little to accomplish PACFLT stated objectives, when you consider that there are marginal requirements in the Eastern Pacific and the time and space considerations to get to the Indo-Asia-Pacific region. PACOM CDR highlighted this point to Congress, “To give you an even better idea of its size, a Carrier Strike Group takes three weeks to transit from the U.S. West Coast to the Philippines; 15 hours to get there in a C-17; ...”<sup>22</sup> Additionally, consider the following Deputy Secretary of Defense Ashton B. Carter statement, “Rebalancing to the Asia-Pacific region is happening on a global scale, and it is happening within the region...Northeast Asia always has been the center of gravity for American forces...but now, more forces will be in Southeast Asia and the Indian Ocean area. This is recognition of the importance of Southeast Asia and South Asia to the region as a whole.”<sup>23</sup> If we are truly trying to recognize the importance of South Asia, and moving more forces toward that region, San Diego is not the best place to headquarter an operational fleet commander and is a luxury the Navy can no longer afford.

### **An Opportunity: Command and Control Forward**

In the latest maritime strategy, “*A Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower*” it delivers a strategy that “focuses on opportunities-not threats.”<sup>24</sup> Published in 2007, it provides many of the key principles that have been espoused in the 2012 DSG as well as the PACOM strategy and PACFLT statements. These guiding principles provide a foundation, an opportunity

for PACFLT that supports moving C3F forward. “Forward Presence ... Operating forward enables familiarity with the environment, as well as the personalities and behavior patterns of regional actors...this influence and understanding contributes to effective responses in the event of crisis. Should peacetime operations transition to war, maritime forces will have already developed the environmental and operational understanding and experience to quickly engage in combat operations.”<sup>25</sup>

Readjusting PACFLT’s operational command organization would produce numerous benefits. First and foremost it would directly support the PACOM strategy, and in turn the national objectives laid out in the DSG. Furthermore realigning the numbered fleets would provide C7F and C3F a more manageable theater of operations, reduce time and space challenges, and improve their ability to command and control forces throughout the continuum of maritime operations. Additionally, this move would support service doctrine and create efficiencies in this fiscally constrained environment. Lastly, this move would provide standardization between coasts in the realm of training.

## **Focused Maritime Theaters**

### **East Asia**

A new C7F AOR of responsibility would focus on East Asia, which is still a large area to manage, but it would have a significantly narrower focus as compared to their current AOR. This focus area would include the Yellow Sea, China Sea (both South and East), Sea of Japan, and Philippine Sea, as well as the northern portion of the Pacific Ocean (see Appendix C). The new East Asian AOR would focus the Commander in several ways. The number of nations in the C7F AOR would be reduced from 37 countries to 15 countries.<sup>26</sup> C7F would retain three of

the five mutual defense treaties in the PACOM AOR to include Japan, South Korea, and the Philippines. The Commander would be able to focus on some of the most pressing security issues in Asia to include North Korea, the rise of China, Taiwan, and territorial disputes. Most importantly, the boundary proposed ensures that one commander, C7F, retains all nations that have competing claims in the South China Sea (see Appendix D).

### **South Asia-Oceania**

This new C3F AOR of responsibility would focus on South Asia-Oceania region. However, unlike the C7F AOR, their mission and AOR would grow exponentially in both complexity and scope when compared to their current training focus. This focus area would include the Bay of Bengal, Indian Ocean, Coral Sea, Tasman Sea, as well as the southern portion of the Pacific Ocean (see Appendix C). C3F AOR would include 22 nations<sup>27</sup>, including two allied nations of Australia and Thailand. But unlike the C7F AOR there are no permanent U.S. Naval bases in this AOR (see Appendix E). Relocating the operational commander and his staff forward would support the growing importance of the region. The Commander would be able to advance relationship with “key partners, including India, Indonesia”<sup>28</sup> as well as allies and other emerging partners.

“Our naval forces are at their best when they are forward, assuring allies and building partnerships”<sup>29</sup> and I would add they are best when they have a commander, in this case C3F forward to command and control which is “... the foundation upon which the planning and execution of naval operations are built from peacetime forward presence, to operations other than war, to crisis response, to regional or global war. It is the tool the naval commander uses to cope with the uncertainty of combat and to direct his forces to accomplish the assigned mission. Naval

command and control reflects the way we organize, train, and fight.”<sup>30</sup> Operationalizing C3F and making them a forward based fleet focused on South Asian-Oceania would establish the presence and provide the foundation for future maritime assets in this region and fill the current void.

## **Two Fleets Forward Are Better Than One**

“U.S. 7th Fleet units take part in as many as 100 bilateral and multilateral exercises each year. In addition to these exercises, ships deployed to the 7th Fleet conduct more than 250 port visits every year.”<sup>31</sup> Clearly having two separate Commanders with nearly equal sized staffs (see Appendix F) will better enable each to lead and manage this dynamic and complex series of exercises and engagements. In this new construct the following major exercises would be divided as listed (see Appendix G).

In addition to exercises and engagements this logic, the benefits of having two maritime commanders forward, would also apply to Humanitarian Assistance/Disaster Relief (HA/DR). “The Asian and Pacific region is vulnerable to many types of disasters, including floods, cyclones, earthquakes, drought, storm surges and tsunamis. During the past decade, on average, more than 200 million people were affected and more than 70,000 people were killed by natural disasters annually. Those figures represent 90% and 65% of the world totals, respectively.”<sup>32</sup> The benefits of having two operational commanders forward presents PACFLT additional options when the U.S. response requires military participation. “USPACOM participated in more than 20 disaster relief operations in 12 countries and one U.S. territory (Japan, South Korea, the Philippines, Palau, Indonesia, Thailand, Vietnam, Laos, Burma, India, Madagascar, Sri Lanka and Guam) since 1996.”<sup>33</sup>



Lastly, there are a myriad of transnational issues that could be better tackled by the collective resources of two commanders and their associated staffs. Some of these are: Weapons Proliferation, Terrorism/Extremism, Piracy, Transnational Crime, Human Smuggling, Migration Issues, Maritime Security, and Resource Competition.<sup>34</sup> Joint doctrine describes the strategic environment as “...characterized by uncertainty, complexity, and rapid change, which requires persistent engagement. This environment is fluid, with continually changing alliances, partnerships, and new national and transnational threats constantly appearing and disappearing.”<sup>35</sup> This definition transcends from the strategic to the operational and even tactical levels. The key direction offered in that definition as a means to deal with the ever changing environment is persistent engagement. Having two commanders forward increases PACFLT’s ability to conduct persistent engagement and gets to the heart of the Indo-Asia-Pacific rebalance.

### **Creating Efficiencies and Standardization**

In light of current U.S. fiscal challenges and the significantly diminished DOD budget, many would dismiss this proposed C3F move out of hand. But, this argument would be at odds with the Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Jonathan Greenert. In his most recent statement to Congress for Fiscal Year 2014 budget submission he stated, “Our first responsibility is to ensure Navy is able to deliver the overseas presence and capabilities required by our Defense Strategic Guidance (DSG).”<sup>36</sup> Furthermore he states, “...the Secretary of Defense ordered a Strategic Choices and Management Review (SCMR)...review does reflect the Secretary’s view that the Department of Defense must constantly examine the choices that underlie our defense strategy, posture, and investments, including all past assumptions...The SCMR will consider the 2012 Defense Strategic Guidance as the point of departure.”<sup>37</sup> This further reaffirms the importance of the DSG even in light of fiscal constraints.

In addition to supporting the DSG moving C3F forward also creates Fleet wide efficiencies. Although the Navy has acknowledged the need for standardization it maintains two distinctive fleets in FFC (East Coast) and PACFLT (West Coast). In 2001, Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Vern Clark decided as “of 1 October, the Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Atlantic Fleet, would assume the concurrent duties of Commander, U.S. Fleet Forces Command (CFFC). U.S. Fleet Forces Command will be responsible for coordinating, establishing, and implementing integrated requirements and policies for manning, equipping and training Atlantic and Pacific Fleet units during the interdeployment training cycle... Further, Commander Third Fleet will be placed under administrative control of Commander, U.S. Fleet Forces Command for matters pertaining to development and implementation of interdeployment training cycle requirements and policies.”<sup>38</sup> Although clear in intent and purpose this goal would remain elusive. The Navy continued to press for the role of CFFC, but the political prowess of Senator Inouye ensured the prominence of PACFLT and subordinate commands remained intact.<sup>39</sup> The U.S. Navy claims “Commander Fleet Forces Command commands and controls fleet assets on both the Atlantic and Pacific coasts for interdeployment training cycle purposes.”<sup>40</sup> On the other hand PACFLT highlights “U.S. Fleet Forces, Commander Pacific Fleet Announce Command and Control Realignment ... further acknowledges that the demands placed on the Navy environment are not the same in the Atlantic and Pacific ... This action also establishes a Fleet Integration Executive Panel chaired by both Commander U.S. Pacific Fleet and Commander U.S. Fleet Forces Command, replacing the Fleet Readiness Enterprise, formerly led by U.S. Fleet Forces Command.”<sup>41</sup>

This duplicity remains highly bureaucratic and inefficient and it is time to make sensible changes. Senator Inouye passed away in 2012, and although politics will always impart

requirements on the military, the argument the Navy has carried for over a decade remains valid. This argument, one commander responsible for the man, train, and equip mission should be reintroduced and explained, highlighting the efficiencies of a single commander.

### **One Coast Doesn't Look like the Other, But for How Long?**

Second Fleet (C2F), the East Coast counterpart to C3F, was decommissioned in 2011. "In a speech during Friday's [September 30, 2011] ceremony, held in front of Second Fleet's headquarters, Harvey [Admiral John C. Harvey Jr., CFFC] described the closure as a "historical event" as well as a part of the Navy's "natural progression." He said the service has constantly reshaped itself to best meet the threats and financial realities of the time and this is no different."<sup>42</sup> In 2013, the DOD budgetary realities are further challenged based on sequestration and other planned reductions. Consider the Secretary of the Navy's recent statement: "We are working under Secretary Hagel's leadership on a strategic choices and management review to assess how we deal with the budget uncertainty facing the Department as we go forward. He has directed that we review the basic assumptions that drive the Department's investment and force structure to identify institutional reforms that may be required, including as we should do all the time, those reforms that ought to be pursued regardless of fiscal pressures...everything will be on the table during this review."<sup>43</sup> In light of this financial crisis it is only a matter of time before DOD leaders start to question why one coast requires a numbered fleet to oversee training and the other coast can successfully provide ready forces without one.

The Navy should continue the natural progression and place one commander, CFFC in charge of all training for both coasts. This statement, made in 2011, would be just as relevant if C3F moved forward and CFFC assumed their current missions: "So today we begin another

chapter - our mission remains the same, our standards remain the same - only our structure has changed ... Our new structure is an operational structure, a command structure, not an administrative one. Our purpose and our focus is on the deckplates and the flight decks - ensuring our Sailors have the tools, training, and time they need to deploy confident in their ability to execute their assigned missions.”<sup>44</sup> CFFC would assume all of C3F training functions and some of their operational mission. Operationally, FFC is the Navy component of USNORTHCOM, and as such its AOR should be aligned to closely mirror “USNORTHCOM’s AOR includes air, land and sea approaches and encompasses the continental United States, Alaska, Canada, Mexico and the surrounding water out to approximately 500 nautical miles.”<sup>45</sup> This new alignment would respect Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Southern Command/U.S. Fourth Fleet’s AOR but otherwise mirror USNORTHCOM’s AOR.

### **Implementation and Recommended Timeline**

“The AORs in particular require close scrutiny in this rapidly changing world, taking political, ideological, topographical, cultural, technological, and military considerations into account, because boundary revisions may create problems more serious than those they solve unless planners are sensitive to many subtle implications.”<sup>46</sup> This paper intentionally does not recommend a specific future location for C3F. This is based on the complexities of moving a headquarters, selecting a location, and creating new geographic seams which require a detailed study. The U.S. Navy should commission a study to determine the fleet headquarters future location, the new fleet boundaries, and the correct manpower allocation between C3F and C7F as missions shift between these may require the movement of some billets. This commission would be similar in nature to the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission (BRAC). Like the BRAC, this commission would “provide an objective, thorough, accurate, and non-partisan

review and analysis...<sup>47</sup>, but in this instance in order to determine the most appropriate location and boundary. This *Pacific Fleet Balancing Commission (PFBC)* would ideally be chaired by a retired four star admiral or someone with similar stature with the gravitas to make such recommendations. This independent PFBC would be commissioned and report its finding directly to the SECNAV and CNO. A few ideal candidates are the former Secretary of Defense, Robert Gates, former Joint Chiefs Chairman Admiral Mike Mullen, or former PACOM Commander, Admiral Robert Willard.

The following notional 24 month timeline is provided for the movement of C3F. Phase 0, Shaping (1 year): Commission the study, and have the PFBC report due to the SECNAV and CNO within a year. Start strategic messaging explaining that C3F is moving to the region and this is a natural progression of the DSG. Phase 1, Initial Establishment (1 year): Move elements of C3F forward to C7F for integration in to operations prior to turnover. Transition C3F to lead role on all exercises and engagements in future AO. Transition legacy C3F training/readiness responsibilities and NORTHCOM operations to FFC. Procure and outfit headquarters facilities in host nation. Move C3F to new headquarters. Phase 2, Initiate (2 year mark): Activate new maritime AOR and assign responsibility to C3F.

## **Conclusion**

The DSG and PACOM have provided the vision and groundwork for service components to adapt and achieve the articulated objectives, now it is time for the components to look for innovative ways to accomplish this mission. The sheer size of the AOR and the predominant feature of the maritime landscape demands that U.S. Pacific Fleet reorganize and balance their numbered fleets, if they are to achieve a leading role in the execution of these national

objectives. Maritime command and control in this vast expanse is vital and impractical for one operational commander. Operationalizing Third Fleet and relocating it forward into the Indo-Asia-Pacific will provide PACFLT significant capability in a vast region that is growing in strategic importance.

This realignment would empower PACFLT with two maritime commanders and staffs forward to focus exclusively on its operational mission and implementation of the DSG in support of national objectives. This would also protect C3F from potential decommissioning like its former East coast counterpart, C2F, and this reorganization would reside largely within PACFLT channels. Additionally, it would clarify the U.S. Navy's organization (see Appendix H). Under the new construct PACFLT would be the administrative chain of command (CoC) to the CNO and operational CoC to PACOM. CFFC would take control of all Type Commands (see Appendix I) and place the man, train, and equip under a single commander. "As the United States transitions from two land wars in Central Asia to the maritimecentric defense strategy announced fifteen months ago, our Naval Forces will be critical in the years ahead. This strategy which focuses on...continuing to build partnerships around the globe requires a forward deployed, flexible, multimission force that is the Navy and Marine Corps, America's Away Team."<sup>48</sup> It is time the PACFLT team adjust their operational fleets for this away game. The recommendations made throughout this paper, specifically the decisions to operationalize C3F, the PFBC, and the move forward are sensible and should be adopted. In closing a forward C3F supports the DSG and PACOM strategy and service doctrine, it would balance the C7F portfolio, create standardization for the Navy, and provide PACFLT two operational commanders focusing on dedicated maritime theaters in East Asia (C7F) and South Asia-Oceania (C3F).

## APPENDIX A



Source: United States Pacific Command, 2013, Web.

## APPENDIX B



Source: United States Pacific Command, 2013, Web.

Modified with Current Numbered Fleet Boundaries



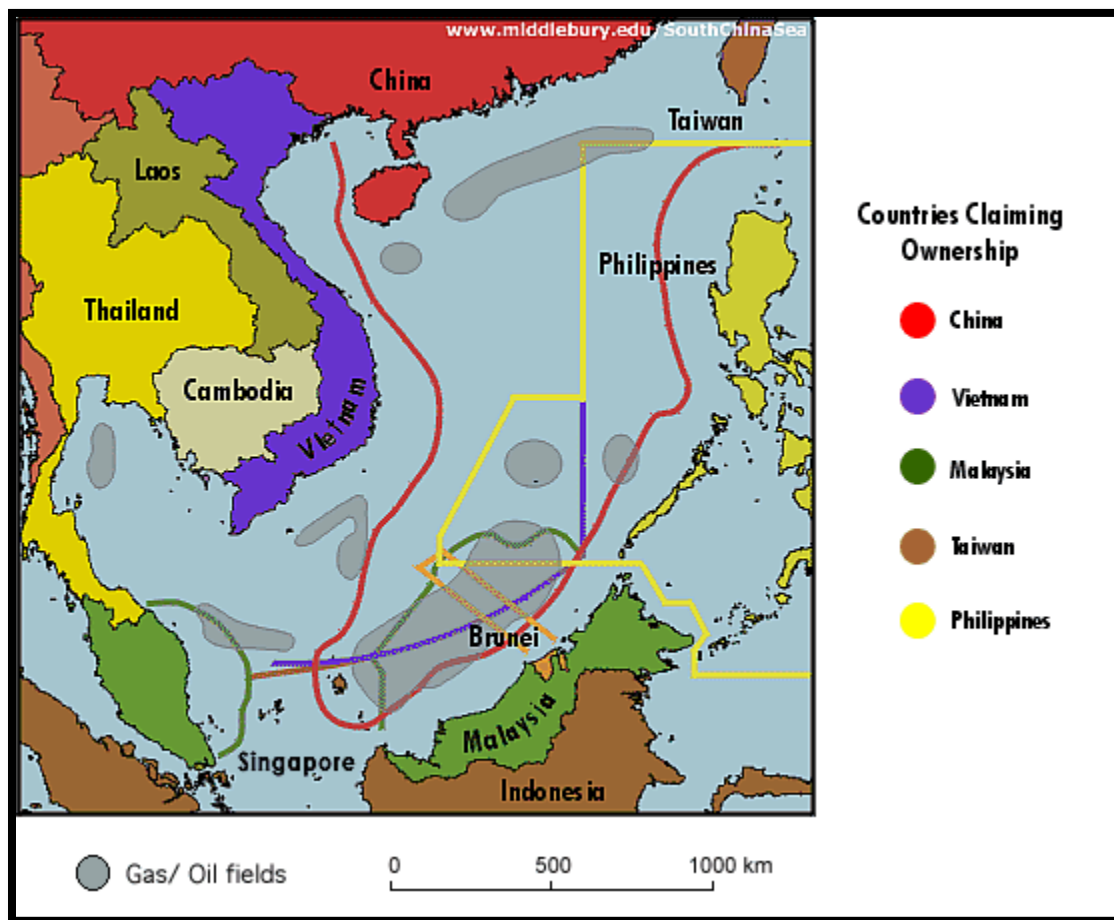
## APPENDIX C



Source: United States Pacific Command, 2013, Web.

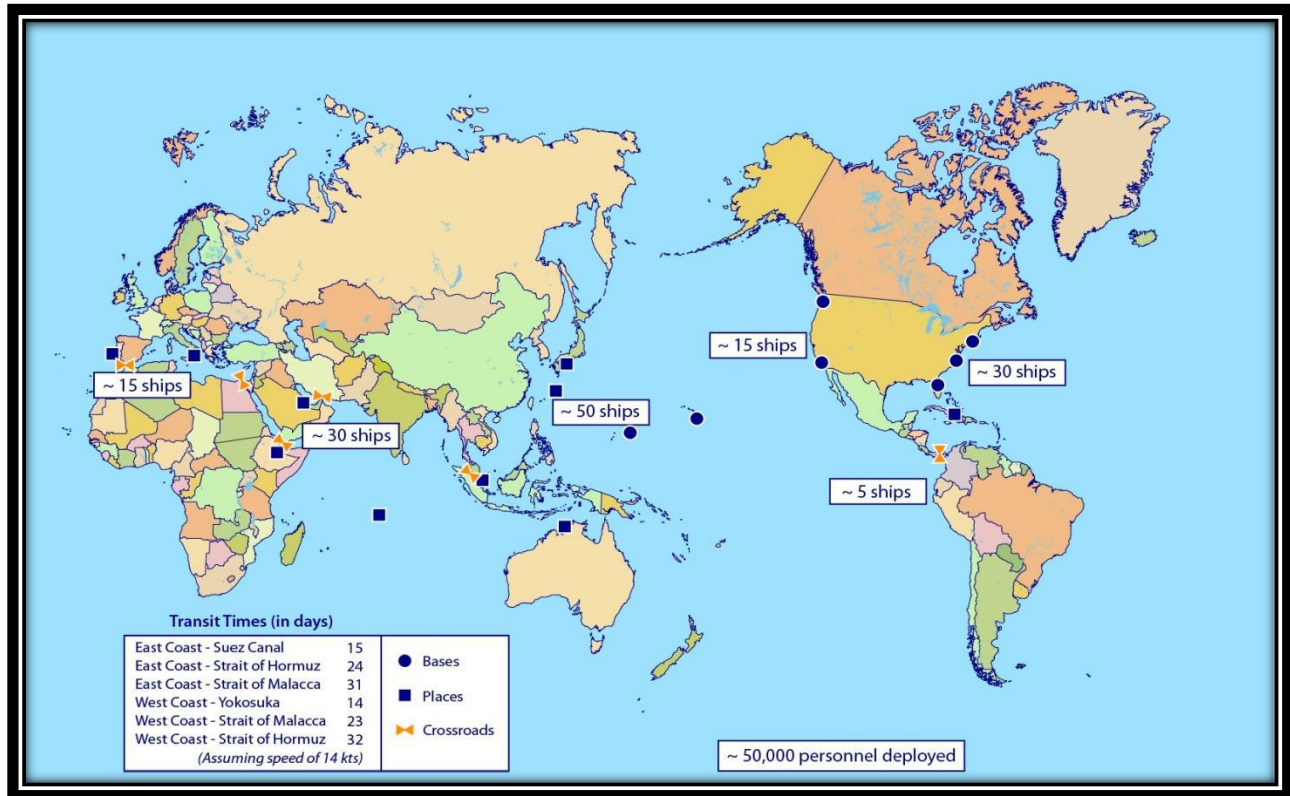
Modified with Proposed Numbered Fleet Boundaries

## APPENDIX D



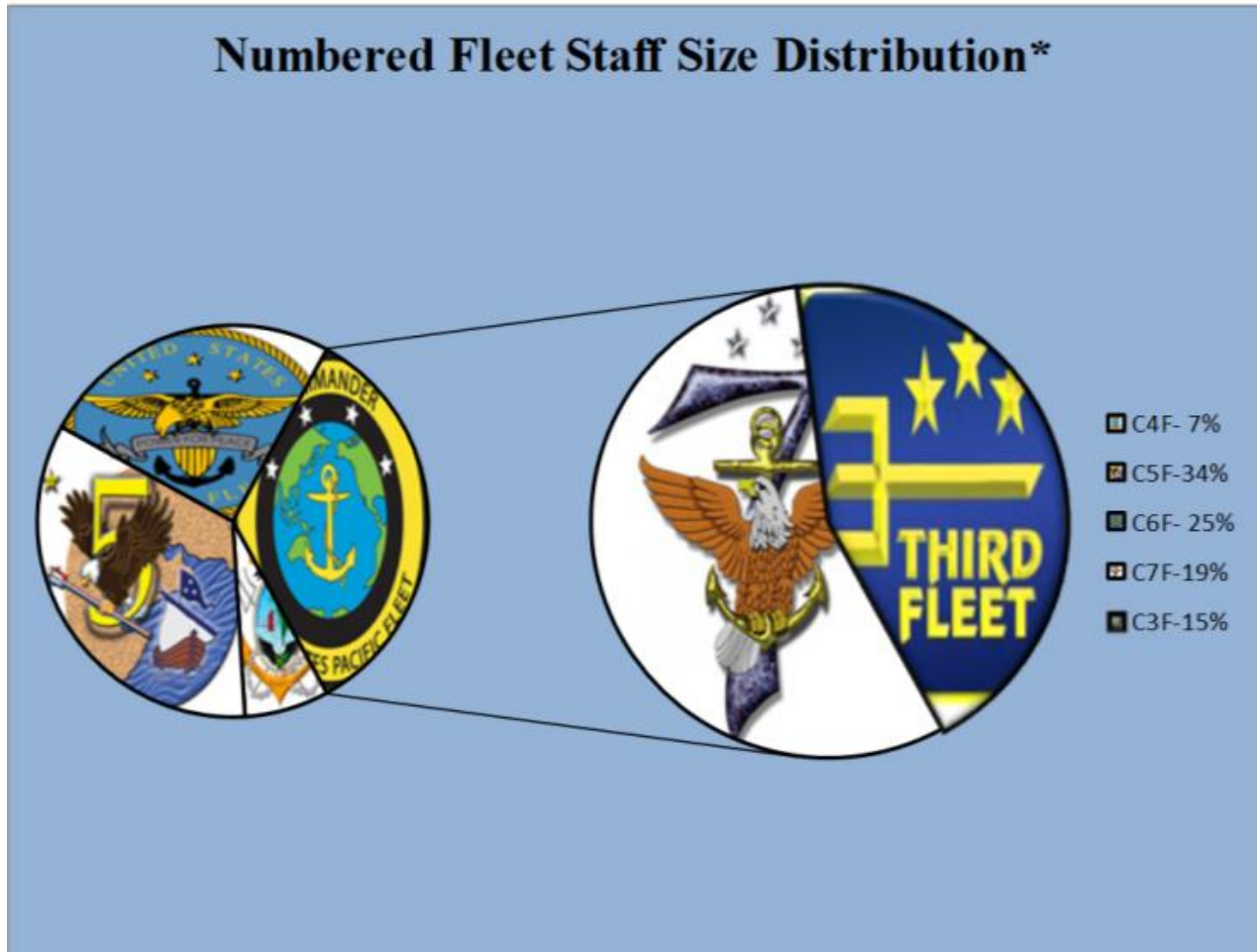
Source: Middlebury College, 2013, Web.

## APPENDIX E



**Source: Snapshot of the U.S. Navy from United States Senate. Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense Hearing. Statement of Admiral Jonathan Greenert, Chief of Naval Operations on FY 2013 Department of Navy Posture. March 2012.**

## APPENDIX F



\* This represents uniformed officer billets only

- C7F is authorized 106 officer billets, they currently have 103 onboard. Their manning level is 97%.
- C3F is authorized 83 officer billets, they currently have 82 onboard. Their manning level is 99%.

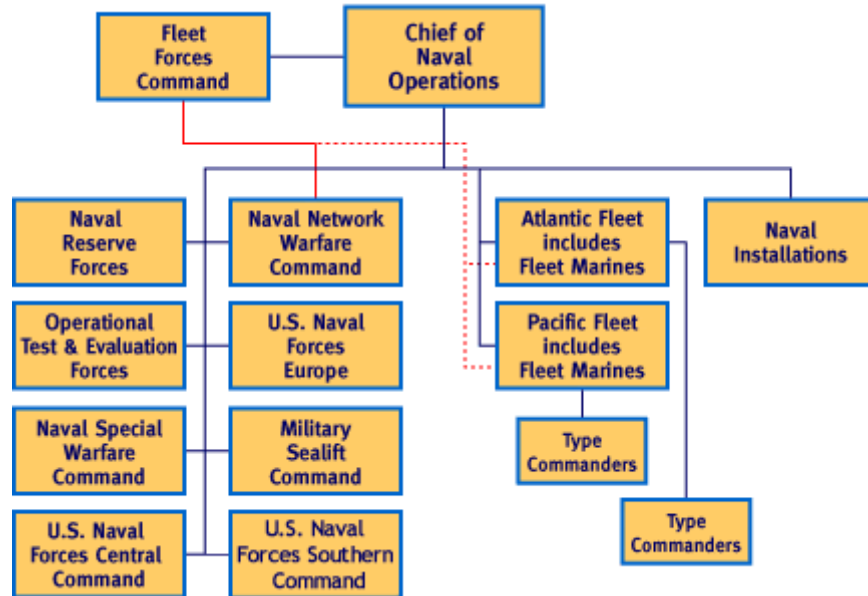
**Source: Bureau of Naval Personnel, May 2013.**

## APPENDIX G

Exercises		
C3F	C7F	C3F/C7F Fleets
<b>TALISMAN SABER:</b> A biennial Australia/United bilateral exercise merging Exercises TANDEM THRUST, KINGFISHER and CROCODILE. TALISMAN SABER is the primary training venue for Commander Seventh Fleet as a Combined Task Force (CTF) in a short warning, power projection, forcible entry scenario. The exercise is a key opportunity to train Australian and US combined forces in mid to high-intensity combat operations using training areas in Australia	<b>BALIKATAN:</b> A joint exercise with the Republic of the Philippines and the U.S. to improve combat readiness and interoperability.	<b>RIM OF THE PACIFIC:</b> A biennial large-scale multinational power projection/sea control exercise. In 2000, participants included the U.S., Canada, Australia, Japan, South Korea, Chile and the United Kingdom.
<b>COBRA GOLD:</b> A joint/combined exercise with Thailand designed to improve U.S./Thai combat readiness and joint/combined interoperability.	<b>KEEN SWORD/KEEN EDGE:</b> Joint/bilateral training exercises (field training/simulation, respectively) to increase combat readiness and joint/bilateral interoperability of U.S. Forces and Japan Self-Defense Forces for the defense of Japan.	

**Source: United States Department of Defense,  
U.S. Pacific Command, “Exercises and Engagements”, 2013, Web.**

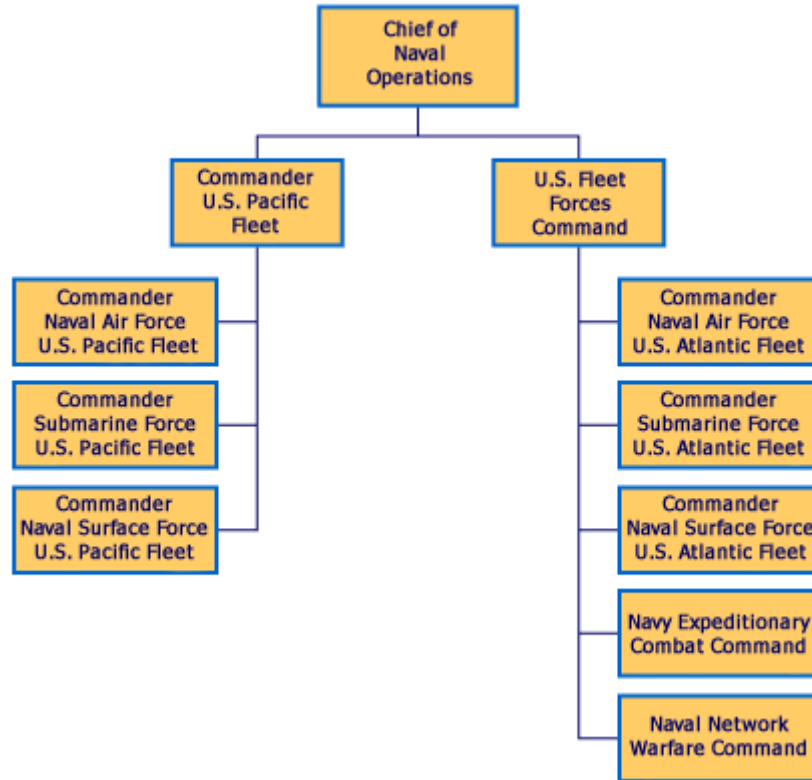
## APPENDIX H



Source: United States. Department of Defense. Americas Navy.

Command Organization, The Operating Forces, 2013, Web.

## APPENDIX I



Source: United States. Department of Defense. Americas Navy.  
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- <sup>25</sup> Ibid.
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- <sup>27</sup> C3F 23 nations will be comprised of Australia, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Burma, Cambodia, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Kiribati, Laos, Maldives, Nauru, Nepal, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu.
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